When proper safety measures are followed, most eye injuries can be prevented. When an eye injury does occur, immediate first aid treatment can be vital in preventing vision loss. However, first aid treatment is not a substitute for professional care. Proper treatment by an eye doctor or emergency medical professional after an eye injury is most important to prevent permanent damage and loss of sight.

If you experience an eye injury or other vision problem, you should obtain a complete eye examination.

Eye Injury

First Aid

Safety Guidelines

Pacific
CATARACT AND LASER INSTITUTE

P C L I

BELLEVUE, WA	1 800 926-3007
CHEHALIS, WA	1 800 888-9903
KENNEWICK, WA	1 800 888-9904
TACOMA, WA	1 800 888-9905
VANCOUVER, WA	1 800 926-7339
BOISE, ID	1 800 926-7380
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THIS BROCHURE IS PROVIDED BY YOUR
FAMILY EYE DOCTOR AND PCLI

Over 1 million people suffer eye injuries each year. Cuts to the eye, chemical burns and foreign bodies in the eye are among the most frequently seen cases in hospital emergency rooms. Many of these incidents can result in serious injuries or loss of vision. However, the ability to give proper first aid for an eye injury can be an important step in saving sight.

What steps should be taken when an eye injury occurs?

When an eye injury occurs, it is important to determine the severity of the damage. This can be difficult because even an eyelash or speck of dirt in the eye can cause extreme discomfort. In all cases, it is better to be safe than to risk vision loss. After first aid has been administered, the eye should be examined by an eye doctor or emergency medical professional.

Why is correct first aid for an eye injury important?

Correct first aid treatment immediately following an eye injury can make a vital difference to the success of further medical treatment and can prevent loss of sight. However, first aid is only the treatment given first until experienced medical help is available. After first aid is completed, medical help should be obtained, especially is there is pain, impaired vision, or any question as to eye damage.

Although first aid is important, with a badly injured eye, it is better to do too little than too much. When in doubt about either the nature of the injury or the kind of treatment required, apply a sterile eye pad or clean handkerchief over the injured eye and seek immediate medical help.
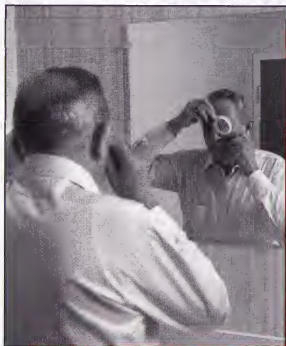
If you are unsure of the proper first aid treatment for an eye injury, apply a sterile pad or clean handkerchief over the injured eye and seek immediate medical help.

What is the first aid treatment for foreign bodies in the eye?

Foreign bodies that enter the eye (eyelash, speck of dirt, piece of glass) can often be removed by tearing and blinking. However, if this is not sufficient to remove the irritant, lift the upper lid over the lower lid, allowing the lower lashes to brush the particle off the inside of the upper lid. Do not rub the eye, as a speck or foreign particle may become imbedded in or scratch the eye. If further blinking and tearing do not remove the speck, keep the eye closed or patch it loosely and seek medical help. Bandaging both eyes may help to limit eye movement and damage to the eye.

Blows to the eye?

Whether intentional or unintentional, blows or injuries to the eye may result in a swollen and discolored eye or eyelid. Apply a cold compress to the eye immediately for 15 minutes to relieve pain and swelling. Do not apply ice directly to the eye, as this may cause further damage. Repeat cold compresses every two to three hours. After 48 hours, alternate warm and cold compresses. If pain persists or if a black eye or blurred vision is present, professional attention is required as internal eye damage may be present.

Cuts to the eye or eyelid?

A cut to the eye or eyelid should be bandaged lightly. Do not attempt to wash the eye or remove an object stuck in the eye. Do not rub the eye or apply hard pressure to stop any bleeding. After bandaging the eye, seek medical help immediately.

Most eye injuries can be prevented by learning and following simple safety measures.

Chemical burns to the eye?

Chemicals and agents such as gasoline, brake fluid, hair spray and grease can cause a painful, red, or burning eye. In such cases, the eye should be flushed with warm water immediately. Hold the eye open as wide as possible with the fingers. Flush the eye continuously for 15 minutes with tap water or clean water from a container. Roll the eyeball as much as possible to wash out the eye. Do not rub the eye, bandage the eye, or use an eye cup. Seek medical help immediately.

Prevention is the best medicine against eye injuries

Nine out of ten eye injuries can be prevented. By following simple safety guidelines, most eye injuries can be avoided.

At home:

- *Protect the eyes from household products by reading instructions carefully, directing all spray nozzles away from the face, and washing hands after use.*

- *Wear protective goggles when doing carpentry, home repairs, gardening, or using powerful chemicals.*

- *Make sure no one is in front of or on the side of a lawn mower in operation.*

At work:

- *Wear proper safety glasses when necessary.*

- *Wear proper light filtering goggles when welding.*

When playing sports:

- *Wear protective goggles during all sports activities involving a ball of any size.*

- *Wear protective helmets or face protectors when appropriate.*

- *Observe the sport's safety rules.*

Around children:

- *Supervise children at play with toys or games that can be dangerous.*

- *Educate children on safety measures when they are using potentially dangerous equipment, such as scissors or a BB gun.*

Around fireworks:

- *Wear safety goggles when lighting fireworks.*

- *Do not light fireworks near others.*

- *Do not put firecrackers in containers such as bottles, cans, or clay pots which can shatter.*

- *Do not throw sparklers in the air or wave near a person's face.*

- *Do not allow children to ignite fireworks.*

Around the car:

- *Do not open the hood of a car around an open flame, match or cigarette.*

- *Use proper safety procedures when jump starting a car.*

- *Wear protective goggles when grinding metal or performing body work.*

When outdoors:

- *Do not stare directly into the sun.*

- *Wear ultraviolet filtering sun goggles in*